



BRILLANTES CAMINANTES GUANAJUATO

Supporting the Future Through Education

Newsletter

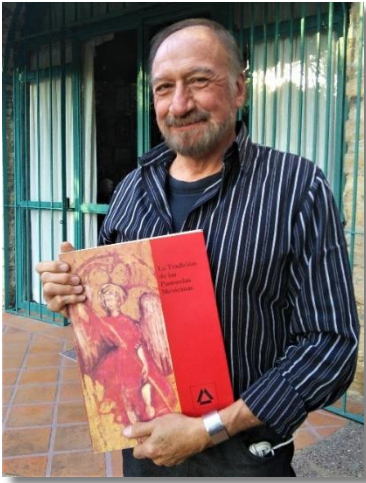
December 2019

PASTORELA 2019

Sunday afternoon on the patio

“Un angelito muy diablo,” our sixth annual Pastorela, took place December 15, in the courtyard of Brillantes supporter Xochitl Tortolero. Twenty-six students took part in an animated performance of the fight between good and evil. After good triumphed, the Pastorela concluded with a chorus of students singing Christmas carols in Spanish and English.





Afterwards, **Juan José Prado**--Pastorela author, director and generous friend--was honored with a book, *La tradición de las pastorelas mexicanas*, an illustrated history of the tradition that dates back to the 1500s

An additional feature of the event was the auctioning of a vintage platter made in the workshop of Guanajuato's renowned ceramicist Gorky Gonzalez and painted by the artist Carmen Parra. The platter was contributed by **Leonor Parra**, another great and generous friend of Brillantes Caminantes. The winning bid came from BC member and mentor Celise Ingram.



Susan Grover (volunteer) holding the donated platter



Betsy McNair our event's Food Coordinator

Following the play and auction, the 90 attendees enjoyed hors d'oeuvres, wine and conversation as the sun went down and evening set in. Once again, Brillantes Caminantes benefited greatly from the generosity of its members and friends.

Special thanks to our attendees for supporting Brillantes Caminantes!



Brillantes' Seven New Students Introduce Themselves



Araceli Lona García is in her second year in the University of Guanajuato in industrial relations: "I decided to study industrial relations because the field recognizes that the most important part of a business, the motor, is the workers. I made this choice because of my mother, whose jobs have been difficult and low-paying. She has no social security from work nor does she have any incentives. So, I would like to focus on the dignified treatment of workers in order to give them the best incentives to better their lives. My professional goals are to undertake projects in which people with disabilities can become integrated into the workforce, where their remuneration is fair and they are hired for their abilities, not their disabilities."

Dulce María Molina Frías is in her third year in the Instituto Universitario del Centro del Mexico where she studies social psychology. "The field that I chose is social psychology: I identify with this area because I like to listen to people, to know what they are thinking....My family has always instilled in me the idea of studying. At first, they hoped I would choose some kind of an engineering field, but psychology has always interested me and they support me. My principal goal is to help myself, my family, and others."



Ariadna Aimee Rodríguez is in her third year in the University of Guanajuato, studying art and culture. She is our first student to prepare for a career in the humanities. "I decided to study art and culture after comparing different careers and talking with relatives about the work possibilities in this area. Even though the conclusions were not really encouraging, I decided to enter this field. I propose to show that people in this field are necessary and that it should be considered very important in a country like Mexico. My principal motives were to share my love of reading and of books, to dedicate myself to encouraging these activities, and to protect Mexican culture. As I advance more in my studies, my interests have turned toward cultural diplomacy, international relations, and the image of Mexico in the world. I would like to be able to share Mexican culture with other countries."

Juan Manuel López Nieto is studying study pharmacological and biological chemistry at the University of Guanajuato. “I chose this field because the natural pure sciences fascinate me, because I believe that those areas of science are of utmost importance and usefulness in understanding the world we live in, especially in order to understand how the vital processes of living beings function and to know the differences between healthy and sick human beings. I would like to work in a health care facility to help the patients with diagnoses and treatment. I would also be interested in teaching and guiding students and finally, I would also like to work in a pharmaceutical or food research lab.”



Jennifer Rodríguez López is studying political science in the University of Guanajuato. “I chose the field of political science because I would like to become a politician. I don’t care about the low pay or how difficult it is to be successful in politics. My main objective is to help people. Sometimes I tell my father that I would like to appear in history books and that children will see me as someone who changed the life of her country. I believe that we Mexicans deserve more than we have and I would like to help us to have a better country.”

Natalia Itzel Acevedo Alvarez studies primary education in the Beneméita y Centenaria Escuela Normal Oficial de Guanajuato (Official Teachers College). She is in her third year. ‘My personal and professional goals are to finish my BA degree and study for an MA. I want to visit other countries. After that I would like to have a family, but only after I have traveled, studied, and helped my parents. They have always worked so that their children lacked for nothing. They have taught me to work hard.’



Jorge Humberto Martínez González is studying mathematics at the University of Guanajuato. “My interest in studying mathematics began in high school when I had contact with other fields of study like logic and physics. I participated in National Olympics in each area, a unique and important experience. In CIMAT (Center for Mathematical Research), I had classes taught by specialists in math and other subjects such as biology, physics, logic, economics and philosophy which helped me to see the beauty, simplicity and complexity of describing the world.”

Greetings from Margarita Silva



BC graduate Margarita Silva sent the following letter to this year's new students—a wonderful reminder that the impact of the BC experience continues after graduation, and that the program engenders a sense of belonging and commitment to one another. It's always a pleasure to hear from our graduates!

Good afternoon. Welcome to the new students who are joining this noble family, Brillantes Caminantes. And greetings to the older students as well. I'd like to share some advice.

Do your best to comply with the requirements of Brillantes Caminantes, take full advantage of all that is available to you, enjoy the meetings and discussions, and welcome every opportunity offered. You will come to love this wonderful group. You can be sure that no other organization will offer you so many benefits. To the members of BC, I send you a big hug and my profound gratitude.

I have been keeping up with you through my wonderful mentor, Cathy Lehman, with whom I have constant contact, and through Silvia Salas. I have not been able to attend the meetings because of work. My days off generally fall in the middle of the month.

Based on my own experience with Brillantes Caminantes, I can tell you that it is a very generous organization. I am eternally grateful to BC for having confidence in me and giving me the means to finish my university studies. And not only that—thanks to Brillantes Caminantes, especially to Cathy, I have a job. She was the one who introduced me to Dr. Larry Buchanan, an important geologist in the field of mining. He invited me to work with him just two months after I graduated.

Currently I am working for Grupo Electrum on a project in Celaya in the field of geological exploration. My job involves being in charge of drilling machinery, geological mapping, and working with drones.

I remember you with affection and I hope to be able to visit soon. Saludos,

Margarita Silva, Graduate in mining engineering from the University of Guanajuato, December 2017.

PS: To the new students, I encourage you to have confidence. I know how it feels to not know anyone yet, but let me assure you that you are in good hands. When I started, I was the only new student, and I felt very odd, but, as is Brillantes Caminantes' custom, they made me feel part of the group.

So—welcome and good luck.



My First Trip Abroad

by Ariana Michell Ramos Rocha

Student of Teaching Spanish as a Second Language

I have always dreamed of one day knowing many places in the world. I think traveling opens people's mind, fills people with valuable experiences, and teaches people to love diversity, something that our society needs.

A month ago I had the opportunity to travel for the first time. I participated in a congress called ASELE that is for teachers of Spanish as a second language. I learned about this congress thanks to a call at my university in the Veranos de la Ciencia UG. It was a great experience because I could get to know Portugal and live new things. In this congress I learned very interesting things about my career and it gave me an idea of how the profession is exercised in other parts of the world.

The Porto city is beautiful, very representative and full of history, I infinitely enjoyed walking through its streets, appreciating its architecture, knowing part of its history and contemplating its sunsets.

I want to thank the organization Brillantes Caminantes, because with their work and passion, they gave me support in every way to make this adventure possible. I am proud to know that effort is worthwhile and that there are dedicated people willing to support students who want to better themselves. This trip was a beautiful adventure and motivates me to know that I can go for more and that the limit is only if I dare not try.

Translated from Spanish by Michell. Bravo!



Report from Luís Martín Ortega Meza

BC Mechatronic Engineering Student



I am currently in my ninth semester of mechatronic engineering. Last summer I had the opportunity to skip a semester. Thanks to that, I am doing my residency in Beiersdorf Manufacturing Mexico (BMM), a German company that manufactures personal care products and is located in the industrial zone of the interior port in Silao, Guanajuato. Beiersdorf has offered me free transportation and meals, as well as a monthly scholarship of 3,000 pesos and a discount on products made by the company.

Right now I am working in the area of Fill and Pack, where my job is to resolve problems on the production line. Earlier this year, I successfully resolved two programming problems.

I am going to begin my thesis project entitled "Reduction of stoppages on the production line of Cans and Jars 1". The main point of the project will be to apply the process of imagery to various formats on the production line.

Brillantes Caminantes Student Meetings are Open to All!

Student meetings are held from 1 to 3 pm on the first Sunday of every month except July. It's a great way to see and hear our students and to experience their energy.

Since last Spring, these meetings have been taking place at **Foro Cultural 81** (FC81), a foundation that seeks to promote appreciation of the arts and sciences and is dedicated to dismantling boundaries between these disciplines. In addition, they work to further cultural exchanges between Mexico and the United States. The lovingly restored building on Calle Positos includes an art gallery on the first floor, a cozy auditorium on the second floor, and a charming rooftop garden that looks out over the city. FC81 was founded by New Yorkers and part-time Guanajuato residents Ed O'Connor and Sal Liriani, who agreed that the mission of Brillantes Caminantes complements theirs in every way.

We thank Foro Cultural for their generosity and invite you to join us there (Calle Positos 81)! Meeting dates, times, and locations are posted monthly on the home page of our website: www.brillantescaminantes.org



Book reports from students are a regular part of our monthly meetings.

Here is **Brenda Yaquelin Aguilar**, a student of Nursing and Obstetrics, reporting on *The Fifth Woman* by Henning Mankell.

Application schedule for scholarships for 2020-21	
Wednesday, January 1, 2020	The application form will be posted on the BC website and distributed to several high schools.
Monday, March 9, 5 PM:	DEADLINE to deliver the application
The scholarship committee will review the applications and those who meet the requirements will be invited to a personal interview.	
Saturday, April 25	Personal interviews will take place at the Hotel Embajadoras, Guanajuato
Early May	The committee will select the students who stood out in the personal interview for a home visit
Month of May:	Home visits
June	The committee will determine which students will receive scholarships

Student Updates

We like to keep you up to date on our students as they make progress or pass milestones.

Araceli Lona Garcia, who is studying Industrial Relations at the University of Guanajuato, recently attended a national conference in Monterrey in September. She and her classmates met with students from universities across Mexico. The conference featured speakers focusing on human behavior in organizations, teamwork, and effective and efficient leadership strategies for reaching both long-term and short-term goals.

Araceli was also selected to represent the University of Guanajuato in a Taekwondo tournament on October 16. Araceli came in 3rd place!

Her success will be an asset in her application to EDUCAFIN (Instituto de Financiamiento e Información para la Educación) for a scholarship abroad. Good luck, Araceli!



Chelo Aguayo, who studies Geology Engineering, attended the International Mining Convention in Acapulco, October 22-26, where she learned a little more about mining by attending a number of interesting conference sessions.



Erika Macedo Tovar, a student in Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Guanajuato, is already looking into internships for the summer of 2020. She has made contact with both an American company and a Canadian company, although applications are

not available until January. In preparation, she applied for and received her 5-year US travel visa.

Erika volunteered to help a *campesina* who wishes to install solar panels on her house. The process had been tied up in governmental bureaucracy for many months. Erika met with the woman, wrote up the proposal needed to jump-start the process, and filed all the necessary paperwork. The woman was granted the right to install the solar panels thanks to Erika's help. It's great to see our students sharing their expertise.

Jennifer Rodriguez, BC student along with a group of students in her Political Science classes, BC student helped plan a gathering to commemorate the anniversary of the Tlatelolco Massacre in Mexico City on October 2, 1968. Although the event at UG was barely advertised, 1000 students showed up on the university steps to protest against violence.



Later in the same month, Jenny and her mom (a hairstylist) organized an event in which eighteen stylists cut hair to donate for wigs for children with cancer. A big shout-out to Jennifer for making her voice heard!

Donate directly to BC from a traditional IRA and save on your U.S. taxes

If you're a retiree over age 70½, you must start taking [required minimum distributions](#) (RMDs) from your traditional IRA every year. If you make what's called a qualified charitable distribution, you can donate all or a portion of your RMD, up to \$100,000 a year, directly to charity and not have to pay taxes on it. Thus, a taxpayer in the 22 percent bracket who donates a \$5,000 RMD to charity saves \$1,100 in federal income taxes. Go to <https://www.aarp.org/money/taxes/info-2019/charitable-gifts-new-tax-law.html> for further information.

Did you know?

- We never commit to new students until we know that we will have the required funding to support them for the duration of their academic careers.
- You can pledge to be a long-term donor, helping us ensure that we have a continuous and reliable source of funds.
- Full sponsorship of a student costs \$6000 USD or \$1,200 USD for five years; half sponsorship costs \$3000 USD, or \$600 USD for five years
- Donations of any amount and duration are, of course, welcome—no matter how old you are!

More information on donating and making an ongoing pledge at
<https://www.brillantescaminantes.org/donaciones-donations>

Another Graduate Success Story



María Fernanda Arreguín Gámez, a December 2015 UG law school graduate with top academic honors, has not been resting on her laurels. While working in the office of the Governor of Guanajuato after graduation, she was accepted to the University of Liverpool School of Law and Social Justice in England where she earned an LLM in International Human Rights. She was later invited to an international conference in London to present her thesis.

Upon her return to Guanajuato, María Fernanda worked for the Guanajuato State Legislature and is now pursuing a PhD at UNAM. Her thesis will focus on human rights during war time. To help underwrite this latest academic

achievement, she joined another attorney to create Nova19, a firm that provides both legal representation and consultation services regarding public policy and private matters. To learn more about what Fernanda is up to and ask for her services, you can log onto their web page at: <http://nova19.com.mx/Blog-Nova19.php>.

Our Board of Directors

A.J. Buckingham, President * David Spencer, Vice President * Anna Adams, Secretary
Jorge Castelazo,, Treasurer * Ingrid Barradas Bribiesca, Member-at-Large

The board of directors and members convene monthly on the Monday that follows the student meeting, 5 to 6 pm at the Hotel Embajadoras. Topics range from the treasurer's report to policy discussions, future planning, and fundraising—a good way to experience how the organization works. **Our Meetings are open to the public!**

Meeting dates, times, and locations are posted monthly on the home page of our website:

www.brillantescaminantes.org .

THANKS!

- To the many students who contributed to this issue of the Newsletter.
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Design: Agota Page

We hope you enjoyed reading this issue of our newsletter, but if you don't want to receive it in the future, e-mail brillantescaminantes@gmail.com with **Unsubscribe** in the subject line. Our next issue, will be April 2020.